

“WHERE IS MY BABY?”  
OR  
IS THERE INFANT SALVATION?

by  
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### **Introduction**

On November 5, 1974 I conducted my first funeral service as an ordained minister of the Gospel. It was a graveside service for Timothy David Knopp, a stillborn infant. The first words spoken to me by Timothy’s mother were the ones in the title above: “Where is my baby?” I had to tell her that I could not tell her yet, but that I would make a diligent search of Scripture to provide her with a biblical answer prior to the graveside service. This study presents my answer to Mrs. Knopp—with some additions resulting from subsequent studies.

### **1.0 Evidence from the Old Testament**

- 1.1 2 Samuel 12:13-23** — The Death of David’s and Bathsheba’s Infant
  - cf. Genesis 37:35 — *Parents join their infant after death.*
- 1.2 1 Kings 14:12-13** — The Death of Abijah, Jeroboam’s Son
  - cf. Isaiah 57:1-2 — *Even in judgment upon a family, an infant may die but be with God.*
- 1.3 Job 3:11-19** — Job’s Desire to Have Been Stillborn
  - cf. James 2:26 — *The stillborn, miscarried and aborted are at rest in the afterlife.*
- 1.4 Psalm 139:13-16** — David’s Prenatal Experience
  - cf. Jeremiah 1:5 — *Prior to birth there is the potential for the care and call of God.*
  - cf. Galatians 1:15

### **2.0 Evidence from the New Testament**

- 2.1 Luke 1:39-44** — Jesus’ Prenatal Experience
  - cf. 1.4, above

- 2.2 Matthew 19:13-15** — Children and the Kingdom of Heaven
- (Parallels: Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17) The context and Jesus' rebuke of His disciples do not allow His statement to be taken metaphorically.
  - cf. Ezekiel 16:20-21
- 2.3 Romans 5:12-21** — Children of the First and Second Adams
- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968 reprint of 1940 ed.), 1:26-27 -

All who die in infancy are saved. This is inferred from what the Bible teaches of the analogy between Adam and Christ. "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many (oi, polloi; = pa/ntej) be made righteous." (Rom. v. 18, 19.) We have no right to put any limit on these general terms, except what the Bible itself places upon them. The Scriptures nowhere exclude any class of infants, baptized or unbaptized, born in Christian or in heathen lands, of believing or unbelieving parents, from the benefits of the redemption of Christ. All the descendants of Adam, except Christ, are under condemnation; all the descendants of Adam, except those of whom it is expressly revealed that they cannot inherit the kingdom of God, are saved. This appears to be the clear meaning of the Apostle, and therefore he does not hesitate to say that where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded, that the benefits of redemption far exceed the evils of the fall; that the number of the saved far exceeds the number of the lost.

This is not inconsistent with the declaration of our Lord, in Matthew vii. 14, that only a few enter the gate which leadeth unto life. This is to be understood of adults. What the Bible says is intended for those in all ages, to whom it is addressed. But it is addressed to those who can either read or hear. It tells them what they are to believe and do. It would be an entire perversion of its meaning to make it apply to those to whom and of whom it does not speak. When it is said, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36), no one understands this to preclude the possibility of the salvation of infants.

Not only, however, does the comparison, which the Apostle makes between Adam and Christ, lead to the conclusion that as all are condemned for the sin of the one, so all are saved by the righteousness of the other, those only excepted whom the Scriptures except; but the principle assumed throughout the whole discussion teaches the same doctrine. That principle is that it is more congenial with the nature of God to bless than to curse, to save than to destroy. If the race fell in Adam, much more shall it be restored in Christ. If death reigned by one, much more shall grace reign by one. This "much more" is repeated over and over. The Bible everywhere teaches that God delighteth not in the death of the wicked; that judgment is his strange work. It is, therefore, contrary not only to the argument of the Apostle, but to the whole spirit of the passage (Romans v. 12-21), to exclude infants from "the all" who are made alive in Christ.

The conduct and language of our Lord in reference to children are not to be regarded as matters of sentiment, or simply expressive of kindly feeling. He evidently looked upon them as the lambs of the flock for which, as the good Shepherd, He laid down his life, and of whom He said they shall never perish, and no man could pluck them out of his hands. Of such He tells us is the kingdom of heaven, as though heaven was, in great measure, composed of the souls of redeemed infants. It is, therefore, the general belief of Protestants, contrary to the doctrine of Romanists and Romanizers, that all who die in infancy are saved.

- 2.4 Revelation 20:12-13** — The Book of Life and the Book of Deeds
- cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10
  - cf. Jeremiah 17:9-10
  - cf. Ezekiel 18
- 3.0 Summary of Biblical Teaching**
- 3.1 Salvation is by Faith in the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ**
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-3
    - cf. John 14:6
    - cf. Acts 4:12
  - Romans 10:9-10
  - John 3:17-18
- 3.2 Unbelief Condemns an Individual to Hell**
- cf. John 16:5-11
- 4.0 Objections**
- 4.1** If infants are saved, “infants who are murdered are better off: their salvation is secured, since they never had a chance to grow up and commit a personal sin. . . . all those throughout history who died in infancy in unevangelized countries are saved, while those unfortunate enough to live into adulthood are damned. Apparently God loves these children and saves them through Christ but does not love the adults, for he does not make eternal salvation available to them at all.” – John Sanders, “Response to Nash,” in *What About Those Who Have Never Heard?: Three Views on the Destiny of the Unevangelized*, ed. by John Sanders (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 146.
- 4.2** Instead of claiming that infants and incompetents who die are elect, why not adhere to the view that they are non-elect? After all, faith (belief in the Gospel) is an indispensable condition for salvation—if someone cannot exercise faith, therefore, they are lost.
- 4.3** If infants and incompetents have not come to Christ by faith in the Gospel concerning Him, how can they be members of the universal Church? If they really are in heaven, to what heavenly group do they belong? Israel? the Church? some other??
- 4.4** Wouldn't it be better to say that infants are “safe” rather than “saved”?

## 5.0 Ministering to Bereaved Parents

5.1 Provide Biblical Answers to Their Questions

5.2 Provide Spiritual Comfort and Hope

5.3 Provide Material Help and Relief

See handout entitled "Helpful Hints From Caleb Cares."

Read and give as a gift the following two books:

Sandy Day. *Morning Will Come*, revised edition. Charlotte, N. Car.: Caleb Cares, 1997. An inspirational collection of true stories that offer comfort, hope and understanding for those who are dealing with infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth and early infant death.

*The Memories I Cherish*. Charlotte, N. Car.: Caleb Cares, 1998. A devotional journal keepsake to encourage women after the loss of a baby.

### For further study:

Houghton, Myron J. "The Destiny of Those Who Die in Infancy." *Faith Pulpit* (May/June 1999). See handout.

Nash, Ronald H. *When a Baby Dies: Answers to Comfort Grieving Parents*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999. A book that is mainly theological in approach, but very readable with each section commencing with a pertinent and well-chosen illustration. Many bereaved parents will find this book very helpful.

Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. "Infant Salvation." *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Available at <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0411.htm>

Old verse befitting an infant's epitaph (from Spurgeon's sermon):

*Short was my life, the longer is my rest,  
God takes those soonest whom he loveth best,  
Who's born today, and dies tomorrow,  
Loses some hours of joy, but months of sorrow.  
Other diseases often come to grieve us,  
Death restrikes but once, and that stroke doth relieve us.*